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PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT COVER SHEET
This is a request for filing a PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT under 37 CFR 1.53(c).

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INVENTOR(S)					
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<input type="checkbox"/> Additional inventors are being named on the _____ separately numbered sheets attached hereto					
TITLE OF THE INVENTION (280 characters max)					
REAL TIME DETECTION OF NUCLEIC ACID REACTIONS					
Direct all correspondence to			CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Customer Number			25006		
OR			Type Customer Number here		
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Address					
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ENCLOSED APPLICATION PARTS (check all that apply)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specification		Number of Pages		12	
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<input type="checkbox"/> Application Data Sheet. See 37 CFR 1.76		<input type="checkbox"/> CD(s), Number			
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Respectfully submitted,

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USE ONLY FOR FILING A PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.51. The information is used by the public to file (and by the PTO to process) a provisional application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 8 hours to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the complete provisional application to the PTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C. 20231. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Box Provisional Application, Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231.

NEN-21918/16
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REAL TIME DETECTION OF NUCLEIC ACID REACTIONS

This invention relates to methods of detection of nucleic acids. In particular, the invention relates to methods of real time fluorescence-based detection of changes in quantity, length and strandedness of a nucleic acid polymer.

Rapid detection and quantitation of nucleic acids is becoming increasingly important in basic research as well as in applied sciences. For example, many hospitals use polymerase chain reaction (PCR) to determine the identity of a pathogenic organism infecting a patient. Nucleic acid amplification techniques are also commonly used to assay environmental air and water samples suspected of contamination. Further, PCR is a key aspect of many forensic investigations. In each of these examples, it is important to obtain results as quickly and accurately as possible.

Various techniques have been developed to amplify nucleic acids including polymerase chain reaction, isothermal amplification, strand displacement amplification and ligase chain reaction. Detection and quantitation of amplified nucleic acids are currently limited by techniques that are time consuming and lacking in sensitivity. For instance, an amplification reaction may be subjected to gel electrophoresis followed by staining to visualize an approximate size and quantity of nucleic acid product. Gel detection often requires hours of processing before results are obtained.

Thus, there exists a need for a method of detecting a nucleic acid of interest quickly and easily.

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

The present invention provides methods for detecting and quantifying nucleic acids that overcome the limitations of prior technologies. In particular, the present invention provides methods of using a labeled nucleic acid oligonucleotide for real time detection of changes in the oligonucleotide indicative of elongation and/or hybridization. The invention further provides methods for quantification of a nucleic acid of interest.

A method of the present invention for detecting oligonucleotide changes and/or quantitating a nucleic acid target includes the step of providing an oligonucleotide. Characteristics of a provided oligonucleotide sequence such as length, sequence and base composition depend on the type of reaction to be performed and the target nucleic acid to be detected. Typical reactions performed include an elongation reaction and a hybridization. Elongation reactions include, for example, a reverse transcription reaction and a polymerase chain reaction. It is appreciated that elongation reactions may include both a hybridization step and an elongation step and these may be detected separately according to an inventive method. A hybridization reaction may include formation of a DNA:DNA, DNA:RNA or RNA:RNA complex between a provided labeled oligonucleotide and a target nucleic acid. The target nucleic acid is any nucleic acid that a user desires to detect, for example, genomic DNA, mitochondrial DNA, total RNA, mRNA, tRNA and synthetic nucleic acids. Characteristics of an oligonucleotide suitable for these and related reactions are known in the art and are detailed in Sambrook et al., Molecular Cloning: A Laboratory Manual, Cold Spring Harbor

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

Laboratory, 3rd Edition, 2001 and Dieffenbach, C.W. and Dveksler, G.S., PCR
Primer: A Laboratory Manual, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, 1995.

5 An oligonucleotide to be used in an inventive method is labeled by
attachment to a detectable moiety. A detectable moiety is a compound whose
presence can be discovered upon application of an appropriate detection
technique. For example, a detectable moiety is a fluorescent compound whose
presence is discoverable using techniques such as fluorimetry. Further examples of
a detectable moiety include a biotin containing compound, compound containing
an enzyme, such as horseradish peroxidase, and a radioactive compound.

10 Prior art methods of attaching a detectable moiety to an oligonucleotide
include enzymatic incorporation of labeled nucleotides into a nucleic acid
sequence, resulting in an oligonucleotide labeled at a terminus or in the internal
portion of the molecule. Enzymatic incorporation techniques are inconvenient for
labeling of internal nucleotides since the labeling must be performed during
15 oligonucleotide synthesis. This precludes convenient storage of oligonucleotide
stocks and on-demand labeling and use. End labeling techniques are also
commonly used to incorporate a nucleotide attached to a detectable moiety and for
direct bonding of a detectable label. However, many of these methods have the
drawback that nucleotides must be derivatized in order to covalently bond the
20 detectable label. Nucleotide derivatization and bonding of the label can interfere
with oligonucleotide properties including ability to hybridize with specificity
equal to an unlabeled oligonucleotide. Alternative methods allow bonding of a
detectable moiety to an oligonucleotide at an internal nucleotide, but generally the

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

choice of the nucleotide to which the linker is attached is limited. Further, steric hindrance is a common problem where bulky labels are attached, causing hybridization anomalies.

In order to overcome the limitations of the prior art, the present invention provides methods using an oligonucleotide in which a detectable moiety is attached post-synthesis. In a preferred embodiment, an oligonucleotide is attached to a detectable moiety that includes a fluorophore. Numerous fluorophores are known in the art including fluorescein, rhodamine, Cy-3, Cy-5, and others such as those listed in Handbook of Fluorescent Probes and Research Products, 8th Edition, (Molecular Probes, Eugene, OR). It has been found that a metal-containing fluorescent compound used to label an oligonucleotide is particularly useful in a method for real time detection of nucleic acid elongation, amplification and hybridization. These fluorescent compounds are especially advantageous for use in an inventive method since they can be attached to an existing oligonucleotide at an internal nucleotide rather than being limited to attachment at the 5' or 3' terminus. In addition, the fluorescent compounds have the advantage that they do not appreciably interfere with nucleic acid hybridization. Thus, a method according to the present invention allows a user to significantly speed up the process of detecting a nucleic acid since oligonucleotides of interest can be stored until needed, quickly labeled, and used in a reaction, in which the product is detected in real time changes in a fluorescent signal.

A particularly preferred label for an oligonucleotide used in an inventive method is a metal-containing fluorescent compound. Metals included in such

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

compounds are the platinum group metals including platinum, palladium, rhodium, ruthenium, osmium, and iridium. For example, ULYSIS labels, such as ULYSIS Alexa Fluor 546 (Molecular Probes), are platinum-containing fluorescent compounds that are suitable labels for an oligonucleotide to be used in a method
5 of the present invention, as detailed in the examples below. Further examples of suitable labels include those available commercially as Cy-Dye ULS fluorescent nucleic acid labels (Amersham) and those described in U.S. Patent No. 6,338,943. Details of attaching a fluorescently labeled metal-containing compound to an oligonucleotide are found in Example 1 and in literature available from Molecular
10 Probes including the Handbook of Fluorescent Probes and Research Products, 8th Edition (Molecular Probes, Eugene, OR).

In a method according to the present invention, the oligonucleotide is optionally labeled by non-covalent bonding to a detectable moiety. Non-covalent binding may be, for instance, formation of an ionic bond, hydrogen bond, Van der
15 Waals interaction, and a combination of these, between a compound including a detectable moiety and the oligonucleotide. An example of non-covalent binding that occurs as a combination of the above includes biological recognition interactions such as antibody/antigen binding.

Following oligonucleotide labeling, unlabeled oligonucleotide is
20 preferably separated away from an unreacted detectable moiety. Separation is by a method known in the art such as use of a filtration column containing Sephadex or an art recognized equivalent as in Example 1. Suitable purification columns include those commercially available as ProbeQuant G50 Micro Column

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

(Amersham Pharmacia Biotech, Piscataway, NJ) and Label It Spin columns (PanVera).

In order to proceed with detection using an inventive method, a reaction mixture, such as an elongation, amplification or hybridization mixture, is prepared according to procedures known in the art. For instance, an elongation or
5 amplification reaction may be a polymerase chain reaction, ligase chain reaction and, generally, reactions containing a nucleic acid polymerase. A typical PCR reaction mixture includes a first primer, which is fluorescently labeled as described above, a second primer that is optionally labeled, a nucleotide mix, a
10 nucleic acid to be amplified and an enzyme. PCR reaction mixtures are known in the art and general guidelines regarding composition are found in Dieffenbach, C.W. and Dveksler, G.S., PCR Primer: A Laboratory Manual, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, 1995. A specific example is detailed in Example 2. A reaction mixture may be a hybridization mixture which typically includes a hybridization
15 buffer, a nucleic acid target and a fluorescently labeled oligonucleotide probe. General guidelines regarding hybridization reaction mixtures are found in Sambrook et al., Molecular Cloning: A Laboratory Manual, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, 3rd Edition, 2001.

Once a reaction mixture is assembled, an optional initial measurement of
20 an oligonucleotide labeled with a detectable moiety in the reaction mixture is made. Measurement technique used depends on the detectable moiety used. In a preferred embodiment, a detectable moiety is a fluorescent compound, and

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

measurement of a fluorescent parameter is made. Fluorescence parameters include, for example, fluorescence polarization and fluorescence intensity.

Fluorescence polarization is a particularly preferred mode of detection of nucleic acid changes according to the present invention. Fluorescence polarization measurements are used to detect differences in rotation of fluorescent molecules. Since a larger fluorescent molecule rotates more slowly than a smaller fluorescent molecule, changes in fluorescence polarization in a reaction including a fluorescently labeled oligonucleotide are indicative of changes in size of the oligonucleotide or its binding to another molecule. For example, fluorescence polarization changes are indicative of oligonucleotide binding to a polypeptide, hybridization with another nucleic acid sequence and elongation of the oligonucleotide. Fluorescence polarization measurements are made by directing polarized exciting light into a sample and measuring the polarized light emitted from the excited fluorophore. The technique is independent of fluorescence intensity as long as the signal is above the detection threshold of the detection equipment used. Various instruments are available commercially for measurement of fluorescence polarization. For example, a Victor2 V device (PerkinElmer Life Sciences, Boston, MA) is used to measure fluorescence polarization in an inventive method as described Example 2. Further general characteristics of methods and tools for fluorescence measurement are known in the art and are described in J.R. Lakowicz, Principles of Fluorescence Spectroscopy, 1999, 2nd Edition. In addition, information relating to fluorescence polarization and nucleic acid detection is found in U.S. Patent No. 6,022,686.

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

Changes in fluorescence intensity measurements in a nucleic acid amplification mixture correlate with changes in nucleic acid concentration. Fluorescence intensity measurements are made with any standard fluorimeter such as the Victor2 V device commercially available from PerkinElmer Life Sciences,
5 Boston.

It is appreciated that multiple assays can be run in a single tube using oligonucleotides labeled with fluorophores having different excitation and/or emission spectra.

In methods to detect changes in a fluorescently labeled oligonucleotide,
10 comparisons are made between a test measurement of a fluorescence parameter in the oligonucleotide-containing reaction mixture at a first time point and a reference. A reference may be a second measurement of a fluorescence parameter in the oligonucleotide reaction mixture at a second time point. The second time point may be before initiation of the reaction, i.e. to measure a basal level of a
15 fluorescence parameter and to normalize for any background fluorescence. For example, in a PCR reaction, a reference measurement may be taken when an oligonucleotide is hybridized to target nucleic acid but before addition or activation of a polymerase.

Where a reference measurement is made in the reaction mixture prior to
20 the reaction taking place, a subsequent step is reaction initiation. The type of initiation step depends on the type of reaction and the appropriate reaction initiation will be recognized by one skilled in the art. For example, where the reaction is a polymerase chain reaction, the reaction may be initiated by addition

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

or activation of an enzyme such as Taq polymerase. A hybridization reaction is typically initiated by heating to dissociate double stranded nucleic acid followed by bringing the mixture to incubation temperature.

It is apparent that more than two fluorescence measurements may be made
5 and compared. In a method to detect an oligonucleotide elongation, such as occurs in a polymerase chain reaction, a first reference measurement may be made in a reaction mixture containing labeled oligonucleotide before the reaction is heated and cooled to dissociate any double-stranded nucleic acids present and hybridize the oligonucleotide to a target. Subsequently, a second reference
10 measurement may be made once the oligonucleotide hybridization has taken place. Then, the polymerase chain reaction is initiated, for instance by addition of a suitable polymerase and a desired number of test measurements are made.

Alternatively, the first and second time points are after initiation of the elongation reaction.

15 Following reaction initiation, a test measurement of the reaction mixture is made. The reference and test measurements are then compared, resulting in an indication of changes in quantity, length and strandedness of a nucleic acid polymer such that an elongation, amplification or hybridization reaction is detected.

20 In an alternative embodiment, a reference is a measurement of a fluorescence parameter in a second oligonucleotide reaction mixture. For example, fluorescence measurements in a reaction mixture containing an unknown amount or type of nucleic acid sequence to be amplified may be compared to

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

measurements in a reference reaction mixture in order to normalize for background or for quantitation. In an exemplary method, assessment of quantity of nucleic acid target is made by comparison to standard reactions containing known amounts of nucleic acid target. Standard reactions are preferably run in parallel with reactions containing an unknown amount of target. A standard curve relating amount of nucleic acid target and fluorescent signal is then generated and the amount of target nucleic acid present in the unknown sample is determined by comparison to the standard curve. Alternatively, a standard curve may be generated by using an internal standard as a reference. An internal standard may be a known amount of a nucleic acid added to a reaction mixture containing an unknown amount of a nucleic acid. The test and reference measurements may be made in parallel in the same reaction mixture.

A commercial package or kit is provided for detecting changes in an oligonucleotide indicative of oligonucleotide extension or hybridization. The kit includes reaction mixture components selected from, for example, nucleotides, a reaction buffer, a polymerase, a column for purification of a labeled oligonucleotide, nucleic acid purification reagents, standards and instructions for use of the components to detect changes in an oligonucleotide indicative of elongation or hybridization. In a preferred embodiment, a kit includes reaction mixture components and instructions on using an oligonucleotide labeled with a metal-containing fluorescent compound to detect changes in an oligonucleotide by detection of a fluorescence parameter.

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

Examples

Example 1

Labeling of Primer

To 5 micrograms of a tubulin forward primer is added 1 microliter
5 ULYSIS TM Alexa Fluor 546 reagent (Molecular Probes, Eugene, OR), brought
up in 100 microliters of 50% dimethyl formamide, and 5 millimolar Tris-HCl pH
7.6 to a final volume of 20 microliters. The solution is heated at 85°C for 30
minutes, and the volume is adjusted to 77 microliters with Tris buffer. The
labeled primer is purified on a ProbeQuant G50 Micro Column (Amersham
10 Pharmacia Biotech, Piscataway, NJ). Final concentration is 10 micromolar.

Example 2

Polymerase Chain Reaction and Detection

The PCR mixture is prepared as follows:

to 25 microliters of PCR Supermix with Platinum Taq (Invitrogen Life
15 Technologies, Carlsbad, CA) is added 1 microliter of labeled primer from
Example 1, 1 microliter of a 10 micromolar solution of unlabeled tubulin reverse
primer and 1 microliter of a 5 picogram/microliter tubulin DNA solution. The
solution is thermalcycled on an MJ Research PTC-100 thermal controller (MJ
Research, Watertown, MA) at 95°C for 3 minutes, and then 40 cycles of 95°C for
20 20 seconds and 55°C for 20 seconds, and then held at 4°C.

Twenty microliters of the PCR products and a control mixture where no
PCR cycling is done are removed and placed into a well of an MJ 386 plate.

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

Fluorescence polarization is measured in a Victor2 V (PerkinElmer Life Sciences, Boston, MA).

The control, or reference, mixture fluorescence polarization is 258 mP and the 40 cycle mixture fluorescence is 301 mP, for a 43 mP increase. This change in
5 fluorescence polarization demonstrates that fluorescence polarization is a measure of primer elongation.

Aspects of fluorescence measurements in detection of nucleic acids are described in U.S. Patent No. 6,022,686.

Any patents or publications mentioned in this specification are indicative
10 of the levels of those skilled in the art to which the invention pertains. These patents and publications are herein incorporated by reference to the same extent as if each individual publication was specifically and individually indicated to be incorporated by reference.

One skilled in the art will readily appreciate that the present invention is
15 well adapted to carry out the objects and obtain the ends and advantages mentioned, as well as those inherent therein. The present methods, procedures, treatments, molecules, and specific compounds described herein are presently representative of preferred embodiments, are exemplary, and are not intended as limitations on the scope of the invention. Changes therein and other uses will
20 occur to those skilled in the art which are encompassed within the spirit of the invention as defined by the scope of the claims.

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

Claims

- 1 1. A method of detecting an oligonucleotide elongation, the method
2 comprising the steps of:
- 3 (a) providing an oligonucleotide;
- 4 (b) combining a detectable moiety and the oligonucleotide to form a
5 labeled oligonucleotide, the labeled oligonucleotide characterized
6 by a non-covalent association between the detectable moiety and
7 the oligonucleotide;
- 8 (c) adding the labeled oligonucleotide to an oligonucleotide elongation
9 mixture;
- 10 (d) initiating an elongation reaction in the oligonucleotide elongation
11 mixture; and
- 12 (e) assaying the labeled oligonucleotide in the oligonucleotide
13 elongation mixture to detect the oligonucleotide elongation.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the non-covalent association is
2 selected from the group consisting of: an ionic bond, a hydrogen bond, a Van der
3 Waals interaction and a combination thereof.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the detectable moiety comprises a
2 fluorophore.

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

1 4. The method of claim 1 wherein the detectable moiety comprises a
2 metal-containing fluorescent compound.

1 5. The method of claim 4 wherein the metal-containing fluorescent
2 compound comprises platinum.

1 6. The method of claim 4 wherein the metal-containing fluorescent
2 compound comprises a metal selected from the group consisting of: palladium,
3 rhodium, ruthenium, osmium, and iridium.

1 7. The method of claim 1 wherein the elongation reaction is a
2 polymerase chain reaction.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein the elongation reaction is a reverse
2 transcription reaction.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein the elongation reaction is a primer
2 extension reaction.

1 10. The method of claim 1 wherein the method further comprises the
2 step of purifying the labeled oligonucleotide.

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

1 11. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of assaying the labeled
2 oligonucleotide comprises a measurement of fluorescence polarization.

1 12. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of assaying the labeled
2 oligonucleotide comprises a measurement of fluorescence intensity.

1 13. A method of detecting an oligonucleotide elongation, the method
2 comprising the steps of:

- 3 (a) providing an oligonucleotide elongation reaction mixture
4 comprising an oligonucleotide labeled by non-covalent association
5 with a fluorescent compound;
6 (b) measuring a fluorescence parameter in the oligonucleotide
7 elongation reaction mixture at a first time point to obtain a test
8 measurement; and
9 (c) comparing the test measurement with a reference to detect the
10 oligonucleotide elongation.

1 14. The method of claim 13 wherein the reference is a second
2 measurement of a fluorescence parameter in the oligonucleotide reaction mixture
3 at a second time point.

1 15. The method of claim 14 wherein the second time point is before
2 initiation of the elongation reaction.

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

1 16. The method of claim 14 wherein the first and second time points
2 are after initiation of the elongation reaction.

1 17. The method of claim 13 wherein the reference is a measurement of
2 a fluorescence parameter in a second oligonucleotide extension reaction mixture.

1 18. The method of claim 13 wherein the non-covalent association is
2 selected from the group consisting of: an ionic bond, a hydrogen bond, a Van der
3 Waals interaction and a combination thereof.

1 19. The method of claim 13 wherein the fluorescent compound is a
2 metal-containing fluorescent compound.

1 20. The method of claim 19 wherein the metal-containing fluorescent
2 compound comprises platinum.

1 21. The method of claim 19 wherein the metal-containing fluorescent
2 compound comprises a metal selected from the group consisting of: palladium,
3 rhodium, ruthenium, osmium, and iridium.

1 22. The method of claim 13 wherein the elongation reaction is a
2 polymerase chain reaction.

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

1 23. The method of claim 13 wherein the elongation reaction is a
2 reverse transcription reaction.

1 24. The method of claim 13 wherein the elongation reaction is a primer
2 extension reaction.

1 25. The method of claim 13 wherein the fluorescence parameter is
2 selected from the group consisting of: fluorescence polarization and fluorescence
3 intensity.

1 26. A method of detecting an oligonucleotide elongation, the method
2 comprising the steps of:

3 (a) providing an oligonucleotide elongation reaction mixture
4 comprising an oligonucleotide labeled with a metal-containing
5 fluorescent compound;

6 (b) measuring a fluorescence parameter in the oligonucleotide
7 elongation reaction mixture at a first time point to obtain a test
8 measurement; and

9 (c) comparing the test measurement with a reference to detect the
10 oligonucleotide elongation.

1 27. The method of claim 26 wherein the metal-containing fluorescent
2 compound comprises platinum.

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

1 28. The method of claim 26 wherein the metal-containing fluorescent
2 compound comprises a metal selected from the group consisting of: palladium,
3 rhodium, ruthenium, osmium, and iridium.

1 29. The method of claim 26 wherein the elongation reaction mixture is
2 a polymerase chain reaction mixture.

1 30. The method of claim 26 wherein the fluorescence parameter is
2 selected from the group consisting of: fluorescence polarization and fluorescence
3 intensity.

1 31. The method of claim 26 wherein the reference is a second
2 measurement of a fluorescence parameter in the oligonucleotide reaction mixture
3 at a second time point.

1 32. The method of claim 31 wherein the second time point is before
2 initiation of the elongation reaction.

1 33. The method of claim 31 wherein the first and second time points
2 are after initiation of the elongation reaction.

1 34. The method of claim 26 wherein the reference is a measurement of
2 a fluorescence parameter in a second oligonucleotide extension reaction mixture.

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

1 35. A method of detecting formation of an oligonucleotide hybrid, the
2 method comprising the steps of:

3 (a) providing a hybridization reaction mixture comprising an
4 oligonucleotide labeled with a metal-containing fluorescent
5 compound;

6 (b) measuring a fluorescence parameter in the hybridization reaction
7 mixture at a first time point to obtain a test measurement; and

8 (c) comparing the test measurement with a reference to detect the
9 oligonucleotide elongation.

1 36. The method of claim 35 wherein the metal-containing fluorescent
2 compound comprises platinum.

1 37. The method of claim 35 wherein the metal-containing fluorescent
2 compound comprises a metal selected from the group consisting of: palladium,
3 rhodium, ruthenium, osmium, and iridium.

1 38. The method of claim 35 wherein the reference is a second
2 measurement of a fluorescence parameter in the oligonucleotide reaction mixture
3 at a second time point.

1 39. The method of claim 38 wherein the second time point is before
2 initiation of the elongation reaction.

NEN-21918/16
20729jks/gs

1 40. The method of claim 38 wherein the first and second time points
2 are after initiation of the elongation reaction.

1 41. The method of claim 35 wherein the reference is a measurement of
2 a fluorescence parameter in a second oligonucleotide extension reaction mixture.

1 42. The method of claim 35 wherein the fluorescence parameter is
2 selected from the group consisting of: fluorescence polarization and fluorescence
3 intensity.

1 43. A method for detection of changes in a nucleic acid essentially as
2 described herein.

1 44. A method for nucleic acid quantification essentially as described
2 herein.

1 45. A commercial package comprising a reaction mixture component
2 along with instructions for use thereof to detect changes in an oligonucleotide
3 indicative of elongation or hybridization.